

THE BELL RINGER

Montgomery Bell Academy

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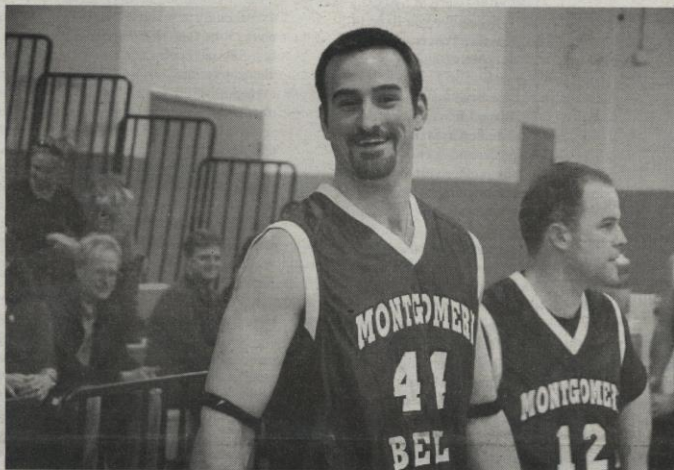
Faculty Charity Basketball Game Packs the Gym

by Michael Seitz
Staff Writer

The MBA community got its first glimpse of March Madness on Wednesday, March 5th, as the Montgomery Bell faculty defeated Hillsboro's faculty in the first annual Faculty Charity Basketball Game.

In a 40-minute frenzy, the rag-tag team of mostly out-of-shape men put on a Globetrotter-esque show. Having spent months working on their game before school and during lunch periods, MBA faculty-athletes hit the hardwood to prove their skills to a packed crowd in Currey Gym. The teachers and coaches played their hearts out to raise money for Saigon Children's Charities, an organization that provides scholarships, school supplies, bicycles, and rice for needy children in Vietnam. A Big Red victory brought in over \$2600, with roughly \$1600 coming from admissions to the game and \$1000 coming from advisee pledges for points each player scored.

With head bands and high socks, the pumped-up faculty team was made up of former star athletes ranging from Division 3 college football players to a college cheerleader. But it didn't take long to see who the true players were on



Mr. Barclay and Mr. Golenor compete in the faculty match

MBA's campus, as Vanderbilt basketball legends Kevin Anglin and Ronnie McMahan displayed their shooting abilities and even attempted some alley-oop dunks.

While McMahan led the team in money raised with \$83.80 and 10 points and Anglin added \$53 and 14 points, it

was tennis coach Zac Hood who found his groove from 3-point range and led the team in points with 16. It is refreshing to see the tennis program carrying the basketball program for a change.

MBA players were able prove victorious despite Hillsboro's dominating 6'6" post player, George Brown. A

highlight of the game came from Coach Sean Kinch who showed his skills by doing a behind-the-back move and blowing by Hillsboro's one woman player, Katrina Carter, on a fast break.

Players even brought in money from more creative pledges. Referee Bill Compton gave a technical to the announcer, Jamie Tillman, to raise money, and although Matt Golenor scored only 2 points, he brought in \$30.50 by throwing his boomerang at one end of the court while the rest of the players were on the other.

"It was the best basketball game I've seen played in the gym all year," Latin teacher Mr. Gaither said. "It's fun to see the faculty's athleticism match its intellectualism." J.P. Bernatavitz, who scored 4 points and raised \$27 commented, "Mr. Tillman

did a terrific job in the organization of the event. It allowed us to raise money for a great cause, and it gave the students an opportunity to see their teachers and coaches in a different light."

Discussions are already underway to have the game again next year, probably at Hillsboro.

A Painful Look At MBA's Discussion Board

by Dalton Fouts
Staff Writer

Hmm... an article on students' use of the First Class Discussion Board, that would be an interesting article to research, wouldn't you think? You'd think...but you would be wrong.

701 posts and an hour of my life later, I have lost all hope for MBA's future. An online forum where students can discuss ideas, post announcements, list what they've lost...that'd be pretty useful, right? Well, again...one would think so, but again, you would be wrong.

In my short tenure at *The Bell Ringer*, no report has been more painful to research. Instead of a useful electronic tool, the Discussion Board is fly paper for intellectually-undisciplined junior schoolers.

Of the 701 comments I mentioned, a mere three were made by high school students. But does that mean the page is inherently bad? You be the judge.

First, let's observe some recent

topics: "Lost: American Freedom," "Email Hunger Strike," "Tennessee is #1," "This might happen if Hillary as elected," and "mccains arms." (I only made up one

of those, and the spelling is *theirs*.)

Sure, I can deal with 7th and 8th graders spouting off their inane political views. Yes, I can stand the obnoxious

colored fonts. I can even take a couple of pictures of cross-dressing presidential candidates. BUT...after 60 minutes of such insults as "nooby noob," a line has to be drawn.

When a poor soul posts an item on the Lost and Found, I have to be the least bit skeptical that all of the 58 who responded actually knew what had happened to his UFO Rubik's cube. And even when semi-serious discussions actually take off, they're soon after shot down with sensitive responses like "jck what u talking about, but ya u run across the border, u should be shot". As insightful as you are, Mr. 7th Grader, that had nothing to do with the U.S. debt.

The real question is: should something be done about such use of the Student Information page? Or better phrased in the enlightened words of another 7th-grader, "what if mccain has seven arms? so lets discuss that now."

Yes, let's.



The source of the culprits



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The staff of *The Bell Ringer* prepares all copy, headlines, and photographs at Montgomery Bell Academy. Franklin Web Printing in Franklin, Tennessee, prints the paper.

Beyond The Hill: Russia Harbors An MBA Alumnus

by Aaron Lutkowitz

Staff Writer

Mark Pettus, an MBA alumnus and son of English teacher Mrs. Carole Pettus, has lived in Russia for about eight years. Mr. Pettus graciously shared his experience with me when I interviewed him via email a few weeks ago.

Where have you lived in Russia? Where are you currently?

I've lived mainly in three cities. When I first arrived in Russia, I studied in St. Petersburg for a year and later lived there for another year while doing dissertation research. I spent several summers living in Moscow, and I'm about to go start a new job there—in a cluster of brand-new skyscrapers that I can hardly believe are actually in Russia. And I've spent a lot of time in Tula, the hometown of my wife (and of Leo Tolstoy). Tula is famous for Tolstoy's estate, its giant cookies, its samovars, and its weapons factories. My mother-in-law is a manager at one of the latter. There's still a huge statue of Lenin in the town square in Tula, and the main street is called "Lenin Boulevard."

You first arrived in Russia eight years ago; did you think when you first arrived that you would stay there for this long?

The first day I arrived, I wondered what I was thinking, coming to Russia for a year. The airport looked like the Soviet ruin that it was, and my dorm room was a coffin. The city was beautiful,

but its facades were crumbling, their bright colors washed-out to various shades of gray. My Russian friend, whom I'd met at Vanderbilt, took the train from Moscow to meet me, though, and helped soften the blow with a salad called "Herring Under a Fur Coat." Despite the initial sense of disorientation, I quickly began to feel oddly at home. I remember, on my third day there, buying my first Russian book—*A Hero of Our Time*, by Lermontov—and trying to read it, sitting beside the Neva river... and suddenly I had some dim sense that I'd "found myself," as they say, which, I can promise you, gentlemen, is a nice feeling after one's college years.

What is the cultural and social atmosphere like in Russia?

As is the case almost everywhere, things are much, much better here than is reported in the news. Things are very lively and for the most part exciting. Yes, there's been an unfortunate surge in stupefying Eurotrash pop music, and, of course, things like this lead educated Russians to lament that, since the Soviet collapse, Russia has tended to import the worst that the West has to offer, at least culturally speaking. But beneath all of the noise and shameless advertisements that the free market brings with it, there's a lot of real creativity, from rock music and art, to the things Russians are historically famous for—drama, ballet, classical music, and film. There's construction and renovation going on everywhere.

What are some of the differences and similarities between living in

Russia and the United States?

I've often had the impression that Russia is some sort of parallel universe—it's as if life in America were somehow stood on its head, so that everything is utterly weird, and yet somehow oddly familiar. Generally speaking, it's true that people are the same everywhere, and now that capitalism has set in, I think Russians are becoming more like Americans every day. But I would say that the most far-reaching difference here is a lack of what Americans might call democracy on an everyday level, on the sidewalk, in restaurants, at offices—that is, a basic respect and courtesy towards other people in day-to-day interactions. This is something I think Americans can truly take pride in. Russians are quite nationalistic on the surface; they love to talk about the collective, the "we," the "our," the great Russian people, etc. In practice, though, any ambitious Russian does anything he can to separate himself from the "ignorant masses." So, for example, if you sit a half-educated Russian behind a big desk and give him an important rubber stamp that his fellow citizens need on some silly document, he'll make them grovel for it. Give him a million dollars, God forbid, and he'll spend it in the most obnoxious way possible; these "New Russians," as they're called, are infamous throughout Europe for their bad taste and conspicuous consumption. Anyway, this basic lack of "sidewalk democracy" is, in my opinion, the reason why bureaucracy and corruption are so entrenched here—and this sort of behavior is so ingrained, even unnoticed, that passing laws won't eradicate

cont. on p. 3

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Contact Will Orman or Mr. Gaither.

Beyond the Hill: Russia

cont. from p. 2

it overnight. Things were this way in Russian society during the Empire, the Soviet Union, and today: society is viewed by many as a teeming mass of dumb, crude peasants, and a small cultural and economic elite. These days anyone who cruises around Moscow in a Hummer thinks he has class and intelligence, when usually he's just a dumb peasant in a Hummer. I think Russia is a real land of extremes; on the one hand, you'll find some of the crudest people you can imagine, and on the other, you'll find some of the most gifted, refined, generous, unassuming, and sincere people you'll meet anywhere on earth. Luckily, I've made several friends who belong to the latter category (most of them are mathematicians!), and that's been the most rewarding part of my time in Russia.

Did they show the Superbowl in Russia?

Only on some obscure cable channel no one gets. Some Russians know that a sport called "American football" (to differentiate it from soccer) does exist, but that's all they know. They confuse it with rugby. Here, the main sports are football (soccer!), hockey, chess, figure skating, and the biathlon. Yes, chess is considered a sport here. And no, I'm not kidding about the biathlon.

What was one of your most memorable experiences in Russia?

Probably the first time I stepped into an Orthodox church just off Red Square—one of many that had been destroyed by the Bolsheviks, only to be rebuilt after the Soviet collapse. I later became fascinated with Orthodox philosophy and eventually converted, but those first aesthetic impressions inside the church (the icons, the singing, etc.) were very memorable. I've had too many memorable experiences to count... spending time with Russian friends at Moscow State University playing soccer in the snow, hearing Russian symphonies and operas in Petersburg, and walking with my wife around Tolstoy's estate, which is beautiful. Of course, getting married here was the biggest highlight.

Have you given any consideration to heading an MBA Russian language program?

I've certainly thought that it could be interesting, although Russian is a difficult language, and there's something to be said for studying a language more closely related to English in high school and then challenging oneself with something more exotic in college. That's what I did, at any rate. Of course, I would plead with any student to study at least one foreign language seriously, no matter what it is—each language, along with its literature, is a unique window on the world. I've tried to look through as many as I possibly can, and am convinced that nothing can broaden one's perspective like language study. And don't choose the language that you suppose will further your career—

choose the one you feel drawn to, even if you have no idea why (I was drawn to Russian even in high school, but had no idea why). Alas, Russian has become less popular since the end of the Cold War, although interest will surely rise as Russia reasserts itself economically and politically. As for me, I became hooked on Dostoevsky in college, decided I had to read him in the original, and finally decided to study Russian. Now, about twelve years later, I'm finishing a dissertation on Dostoevsky. And the names familiar in the US—Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov—are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Russian literature. This is the case with any culture and language.

Would you recommend that MBA students visit or even temporarily stay in Russia?

I would highly recommend that everyone make a point of visiting Russia at least once, especially if they're making the "Grand Tour" of Europe during high school or college. Spend a day or two each in St. Petersburg (a.k.a. Leningrad) and Moscow, the former Imperial capital and the former Soviet capital, worth visiting for their historical interest alone. Western Europe is great, but nowadays I think students should make a point of pushing into Eastern Europe and Russia, for something more exotic. If anyone plans to visit, they can get in touch with me. I enjoy showing visitors around whenever I can, and most of them are surprised by how much Russia has to offer, whether they're into history, art, music, literature, or whatever.

What are your thoughts on Russian President Vladimir Putin? Has he made Russia a better place since he came to power?

It's interesting—before Putin ever appeared on the scene, many Russians (including the likes of Solzhenitsyn) speculated that what Russia really needed was something of an oxymoronic "authoritarian democrat," who would provide stability and structure from above (especially after the Yeltsin years, which Russians still regard as something like the Wild West) while encouraging economic development and the liberalization of society. Despite the (often justified) criticism from the West, I believe that, in general, Putin has been more or less what Russians needed and certainly what most of them seem to want (Putin is popular here for a reason). The difference between Russia today and Russia of eight years ago, when I first got here, is hard to convey. As with any transformation of this magnitude, there are positives and negatives, and many would credit high oil prices, not Putin, with the turnaround. But it's simply indisputable that Russians are happier and more prosperous than they have been in a long time. To compare Putin to Stalin, as is so often and so crudely done in the US, is simply ridiculous. In general, I'm amazed by the

stupidity of Western journalism on Russia, which makes me question as well the accuracy of reports on countries in which I have no personal experience. It's not hard to understand why Russians are insulted by this level of condescension.

Should the United States worry about Russia increasing its power around the world? Are Russia's interests congruent with America's interests?

Russians are extremely patriotic, and their national pride took a serious blow when the Soviet Union disintegrated. Now, Russia is resurgent, and Russians want, above all, to be respected, to be treated as equals on the world stage, especially after being all but dismissed for a decade or so. I think this is what American diplomats, very undiplomatically, most often forget. Basic human psychology tells us that the worst way to persuade someone to do what's best for him is to tell him what's best for him; this is doubly true of Russians, for whom irrational behavior is a cornerstone of their national philosophy. For all of the criticism, I'm convinced that Russia is generally headed in the right direction—one need only remember how far things have come and how much worse things could be! I think that journalists and politicians in the West often lose their historical perspective, and engage in combative rhetoric that is totally counterproductive, particularly when it

comes to preaching about democracy. When Putin inevitably counters with criticisms of his own, our diplomats and journalists become scandalized and self-righteous. Generally, Russians are very friendly towards Americans, as long as Americans treat them as equals.

What reforms does the Russian government need to make?

Economically, it's well known that Russia is overly dependent on exports of its vast reserves of natural resources, such that its current economic boom is due in large part to sky-high oil prices. So there's a lot of concern here about diversifying the economy and promoting growth among small businesses, manufacturing, and service industries. The consumer market here is growing rapidly. Russians are generally very well-educated and creative, so they have a lot of human capital to draw on. Another challenge is spreading the wealth, especially geographically. Wealth and power are completely concentrated in Moscow, so that, say, young people who live even in fairly large cities feel that if they're not in Moscow, they're literally in the middle of nowhere. Nevertheless, growth is starting to spread to some of these "provincial" cities as well.

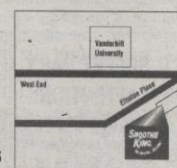
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Sophomores Write Research Papers

by Daniel Green
Staff Writer

Every year at MBA a new batch of sophomores is put through the trials of writing their first full-length research paper. It has become a sort of rite-of-passage, if you will, for MBA students.

The experience consists of choosing a difficult and in-depth topic about an historical event, required reading of three novels based on your topic, and grueling hours of research and filling out note cards, which will eventually number enough to fill a standard note-card box. The cards contain the data about the selected historical event and about literary criticism written on the pertinent novels.

All of this information must then be structured and put into the longest outline any MBA student has ever written. Last are the rough drafts and the final product, an exhaustingly long paper that is about twice as long as a normal theme.

Some of this year's sophomores have embraced this trying test assigned by tenth-grade English teachers Mr. Moxley and Ms. Anderson. One student remarked, "I'm actually really enjoying the assignment. While I wasn't exactly thrilled to have assigned reading and note cards, it's ten times better than last year's speech competition, and the books I'm reading have been very good (*Invisible Man* and *On the Road*)."

Another sophomore chose to look at the paper with an optimistic

outlook: "I think the experience will help when I'm writing themes in the future. Also, I like having one large paper rather than two themes."

Criticism of the research paper was, as expected, widespread. One student said of the steps of the process, "I don't like the fact that we're required to turn in notecards and such on certain 'deadlines,' and, if there are any such 'deadlines' at all, I feel that they should be suggestions and not affect the actual grade of the paper. The product should only count, in terms of final grade at least, and not the process."

When I mentioned the research paper to another sophomore, he simply said, "I hate it!" Some students' issues were not with the paper itself but with a certain chemistry teacher's scheduling a test on the same day the research paper was due.

Since every sophomore's research paper was turned in last Thursday, the entire class has let out a collective sigh after a job well-done. The tenth-graders have survived the English department's attempt to break them and to drive them into insanity, and they now have Spring Break to look forward to. The hardest part of English II is in the rear-view mirror for these sophomores. There are just two long and tiring years at MBA left ahead of them, and, to all you freshmen, you are the next to be initiated as true MBA students.

Connecting Beyond the Hill: the New Alumni Network

by Pat Killian
Staff Writer

The leaders of MBA work hard to cultivate bonds of community here on the Hill, and to ensure that these bonds are put to good use the MBA Alumni Office has developed a new online Alumni Network, part-directory, part-social network, and fully equipped to perpetuate the Big Red spirit far beyond the campus itself.

The network – to be launched on Career Day (4/7) – is contained on a password-protected site accessible through the school website. In a sense, the site is just the alumni directory (published every five years) but online in an easily updatable format.

However, the system's capabilities reach far beyond that of an address book. The main page of the site displays selectable calendars and updates (for sports, alumni events, etc.). The directory portion of the site contains all information on every alumnus in the MBA database. Once he receives his password, any alumnus can then personally update and edit his information as he pleases. The directory can also be searched and broken down by a number of variables, such as class year, address, or occupation.

While the contact information available is impressive by itself, the true value of the new network lies in the interaction it promotes. The system contains message boards for any sort of discussion: job listings, common hobbies, cars for sale, whatever.

More specifically, the network

encourages "mentor groups." These groups, centered on some common interest, have similar variability and could bring together anything from a college's alumni to golf partners. Mr. Scott O'Neal says the purpose of such groups is "to create shadow and contact opportunities," especially for younger graduates just entering the wider world. "It's pretty simple," he says, "but it's got great potential."

The Career Day launching is part of the Alumni Office's "grassroots" campaign for the network's promotion. The office plans to introduce the site to younger, more technically-inclined graduates, who would also benefit more from the network's contact opportunities. These young alumni will put the network to more immediate use and bring it into older alumni's radars.

The current MBA student may think the site useless now, until he leaves the Hill. After all, high school students do not receive passwords or access to the site at all. However, Mr. O'Neal is sure that the network will provide benefits even before graduation. For those students in the midst of their college searches, the network will open doors to college students and professionals in certain fields, all of whom will probably be glad to help and talk with curious students. By just asking the Alumni Office, this network will open to any needy student.

Through the efforts of the Alumni and Technology Offices, meetings with other MBA alumni will not be chance encounters but become readily-creatable and regular occasions.

The Full Moon Film Festival Is Coming Soon

by Alvin Kim
Staff Writer

MBA will again this year host the Second Annual Full Moon Film Festival. Like last year, the competition is open to anyone in grades 9-12.

With this project, MBA hopes not only to reach out to the community by using the power of film, combined with technical and artistic showmanship, to attract students from all backgrounds, but also to teach students to embrace media technology by establishing Nashville as the national hub for high school filmmakers.

The Festival program has already held two very successful seminars, educating amateur movie-makers, but those interested can still attend one last lecture on Saturday, March 29, at the University School of Nashville.

Students from MBA are strongly encouraged to consider entering

the competition as many more already have. Please keep in mind that experience is not required and that MBA student Adrian Carey won first place last year without having ever made authentic movies before.

Aside from the cash prizes, (4th place: \$500, 3rd place: \$1000, 2nd place: \$2000 and 1st place: \$3000), the winner of the contest will have his/her film screened at the Nashville Film Festival.

Important upcoming dates include: March 15th: letter of intent due, and April 4th: film submission deadline. The time limit is 6 minutes and 30 seconds total, and filmmakers can make any movie based on a person or event from American history within 1770-1990, as long as it is not a horror film.

If interested, please visit www.fullmoonfilmfestival.com or look it up on Facebook or Myspace. For help in this competition, please contact Mr. Rozario.

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Senior Scene

by Max Webster
Staff Writer

Despite the onset of second-semester senioritis, MBA's class of 2008 has continued to dominate in every field possible here on The Hill and around the country.

With college decisions looming less than a month away, Austin Branstetter received the Morehead-Cain award at the University of North Carolina, a full scholarship complete with stipend and numerous other perks.

On the athletic fields, Christian Waddey received the Admiral William P. Lawrence Award, recognizing him as the top high school football scholar-athlete in Middle Tennessee. Meanwhile, all the world's a stage for seniors Brendan Mayhew and Garrett Anglin, who have starred in the most recent theatrical productions at MBA and Harpeth Hall.

In the world of speech and debate, MBA seniors continue to reign supreme around the entire nation. At MBA's own prestigious Southern Bell Forum Extemporaneous Speaking Round Robin X, which invites the top 16 extempers from around the country to

compete in a grueling three-day marathon, Max Webster claimed second place, thwarted by one of his top foes from Massachusetts, by a single point. Senior Robert Awh continues to show masterful performances, like his quarterfinal finish at UC Berkeley and 2nd Place at Vestavia Hills, qualifying him for the Tournament of Champions in Policy Debate. Corey Metzman is also fully qualified for the "TOC" in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

MBA's Mock Trial Team, led by six seniors, finally quenched the 10-year drought by winning the city championship over such foes as Hume Fogg and Ensworth. Max Webster was the A Team's MVP, Jimmy Anderson was the B Team's MVP, and Corey Metzman was the tournament's Outstanding Defense Attorney.

MBA also ended a regional drought in Science Olympiad by taking a first-place victory and a berth in the state tournament. The diversity of excellence by MBA's senior class is a true testament to the well-rounded and dedicated students who all strive to fulfill the motto *Gentleman-Scholar-Athlete*.

Juniors Are Active In The Spring

by Fadi Pulous
Staff Writer

The Junior Class is looking forward to a great fourth quarter and an even better spring break, with spring sports a strong focus.

This Spring Break will be spent many different ways as juniors travel across the nation for both relaxation and college visits. Harrison Stringfellow is spending his spring break traveling to visit NYU, Virginia Tech, UVA, and Johns Hopkins. Aaron Barrett didn't want to say where he was going, but he did want to mention he will be attending Ole Miss in the fall of '09...a bit of speculation. Chunbum Park is looking forward to visiting the University of Georgia, the University of Tennessee, and Davidson College. He's also preparing for Science Olympiad and Envirothon.

Will Holt has an exciting break planned, as he's going to Chattanooga to get the Krystal folks to put us in the Hall of Fame. Then he's going to Athens on March 18th, and Nick Williams' mom is his chaperone. Will is looking at England for college, and he also wanted to add that he's going to a Bruce Springsteen Concert with Mr. Morrison later in the quarter. And for all the ladies looking for Will to take you to prom: he says his flight will be late, so save him that last dance because you can't leave 'til he arrives. Wow, Will! That does not sound at all conceited.

Daniel Green is putting his

Spring Break to good use by going to New Orleans for the mission project. Way to go, Daniel, in representing the school well. Crawford Standing wanted to mention that Lax is going great, with Bailey Brandon, Connor Shope, Kyle Garrett, Sam Lincoln, and Trip Shearer, along with himself, assisting Varsity Lax toward another title.

Ryan Penney is staying in town and looking forward to working toward getting his Eagle Scout ranking. Edward Powell, known as Ed P, is going to visit Georgia Tech on his way to the Florida Keys. Ed P is clearly mentioning Georgia Tech only to subliminally imply he's going to have the greatest tan when he gets back. Thank you, Ed.

Richard Brunsting is going to Puerto Rico and looks forward to a strong team showing for the tennis team. Jamie Cooper was going to Cabo, but he now can't, so instead he's going to Seaside with Perry Webb and Max Molteni. He claims he'll return a different ethnicity. This sounds like a friendly tan battle between Ed P and Jamie. I'm also looking forward to a good spring break. I'm planning to see UGA, Emory, Davidson, and UNC.

So that's the news from the junior class; look forward to seeing all the juniors compete on the Lax, Soccer, Track, and Tennis teams.

Freshmen Look Towards Spring Break

by Andrew Powell
Staff Writer

Three-quarters of the way through their first year in the high school, the freshman class is in dire need of a break. Luckily, Spring Break is almost here! Spring Break plans are all the buzz, and many students have interesting and out-of-the-ordinary plans for their week off: Connor Pagnani is reportedly going to Zimbabwe, Paul Van Pernis is going on a mission trip with his church to Tijuana, Gage Baxter is going on the MBA trip to New Orleans, Jack Hallemann is going snorkeling and spear-fishing in the Bahamas, Walton Macey and Matthew Johnson are both going to Florida, Andrei Lucaci will be spending his time "sleeping in the sunny town of L.A. (i.e. Lower Antioch)," Paul Baker is simply going to "party 'til no end," and last but not least, Chris Goodrich is getting his wisdom teeth out (fortunately for him *Smash Bros.* just came out).

In the midst of looking forward to Spring Break, the class has been active in past weeks. In particular, the class officers have been working to promote the Richland Creek Run (April 5th, 8 A.M.). For this project, class VP Will McCaskill has been working with Dr. Bailey to organize volunteers from the class, provide pledge cards for MBA participants in order to raise money for the Autism Society of Tennessee, and encourage involvement from the MBA community. Their hard work will surely

pay off to benefit MBA as well as the community.

The main activity of the class of 2011, though, in the past few weeks has been the annual Freshman Speech Competition, organized and executed due to the efforts of Dr. Seay. Each boy in the class prepared a 3-5 minute speech on one of 3 topics: the environment, sportsmanship, or discovery. They presented these speeches in small groups, with one person moving from each group. Small group winners, who competed in the semi-finals last Friday, were Will Granberry, Max Werthan, Tom Markham, Jack Hallemann, Mason Kirkpatrick, Philip Spelman, Kyle Meadows, Max Coyle, and I. All of the speeches were great, on a broad range of topics ranging from global warming to overbearing parental involvement in sports. A basic breakdown of general speech topics was as follows: 27% Environment, 30% Discovery, and 43% Sportsmanship. Among the most original topics was Philip Daniele's, on "The Discovery of Discovery". In the finals on Monday, Andrew Powell finished 1st in the competition, Philip Spelman took 2nd, and Tom Markham was 3rd. I hope that everyone learned something about public speaking from this valuable experience, and many thanks to Dr. Seay for his hard work. Have a great break!

Sophomores Get Involved

by Daniel White
Staff Writer

Can you believe the Class of 2010 is about to be juniors in two months? Well, believe it. This year has gone by so fast and it's been a great and memorable one, despite the usual car crashes, boyfriend/girlfriend drama, and your typical sophomore happenings.

The sophomores just completed an MBA rite of passage—the sophomore research paper. This paper began in August with topics being given out, book reports due in January, five billion note cards with sources, and the six- to ten-page paper, depending on the level of English II. Several students stayed up until the wee hours of the morning, including my 2:30 a.m. To commend the students for this arduous task, some teachers celebrated, including Mr. Kelly's video and Mr. Tarkington's donuts. Scholar Aldon Boston-Boyd described his experience by quoting late rapper Tupac Shakur from his song *Dear Mama*, "If you make it through the night, there's a brighter day." Corbin Williams called it "a great experience for when I go to Vanderbilt, God willing." And an anonymous sophomore avers, "Hated it with a passion."

In addition to being front-runners in service hours, the sophomores are planning a Putt Putt golf course event, in which a course will be set up around

campus and students and faculty can hit balls to help raise money for local charities.

Athletically, several sophomores are competing in the spring sports and contributing greatly to these teams. Sophomores John Andrews, Brad Bars, Aldon Boston-Boyd, Jack Bouchard, Kyle Brantley, Quinton Burks, Bennett Cain, Will Campbell, Kevin Carr, Drew Daniely, Cole Doster, Sam Denney, Dalton Fouts, Mac Frith, Tee Griscom, Andrew Hornbuckle, Wiley Hunt, Alex Karpos, Campbell Kinnard, Fitz Lassing, Austin Locke, Stuart Murphy, Jeff Nutkis, Andrew Phillips, Dylan Petraitis, Ryan Venable, Richard Wall, Daniel White, and Corbin Williams are competing in track and field; Naveen Chadavalada and Jake Hymes are in Tennis; Rob Smith and Turner Henderson are in Soccer; Sam Berklacich, Matt Bracy, George Curtis, David Dalton, Mac Hudson, Keesler Sanders, and Nate Smith are competing on the Varsity Lacrosse Team, while Patrick Clarke, Morgan Cram, Andrew Holmgren, Kevin Lurey, and Matt Moynihan are in JV Lacrosse; Luke Colbert is the only sophomore on the Varsity Baseball team, but sophomores David Lee, Oliver Oldacre, William Tanner, Steven Gaitens, Jackson Roberts, Neil Reinhardt, and Denney Sandwith are on the JV Baseball team.

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Climb To A Great Experience

by Jimmy Balser
Staff Writer

Just a stone's throw away from West End is a new sort of monster for the strong to conquer. Climb Nashville, in case you haven't heard, is now considered one of the southeast's best climbing facilities. And if you're like me, you can use the prestige of Climb Nashville as an excuse for the incredible amount of time spent falling on your back.

To clear up one misconception many people seem to have about the climbing community: climbers are not all of one type. The climbers at Climb Nashville on any given day may range from youngsters attending a 10-year-old's birthday party to psychos who can hold themselves upside down by one finger.

The young, beanie-wearing staff is unbelievably helpful, and many of them have climbing prowess that could show up Spiderman. The two real choices a climber has at the beginning are "routes" or "bouldering." Both involve color-coordinated paths that are categorized by difficulty. Routes are those high walls where a climber needs a harness and a partner to enable him to finish.

Routes are probably the easier of the two paths, but are by no means easy. Some routes have what appear to be entire sections missing, and a climber has

to look for dents and cracks in the wall to proceed. Recently a route was built that required a run and jump start. I didn't see anyone get that one.

Bouldering, on the other hand, has no learning curve. The wall is only about 10 feet tall, but those 10 feet may frustrate a person to the point of insanity ...and rip his hands, too. Still, a climber doesn't need to worry about failure as he tumbles toward the mat below; he is in good company. Everyone falls.

When I asked MBA's resident climb-master, John Michael McGinn, why he exposes himself to the physical abuse, he replied, "The real draw to Climb Nashville is probably the atmosphere. Everyone is laid back, and climbers learn and improve at their own pace." This is good news for those who enjoy advancing their individual strength, i.e. those defeated by every little league sport imaginable.

Climbers Nick Williams and Patrick Sohr had a few more words to say about the experience: "Although the learning curve can be extremely steep, few other sports give the sense of accomplishment one feels when he grasps the last rock of a wall". And thanks to Nashville's (and MBA's) increasing rock junkie population, alternative sports fans can rejoice in Climb Nashville's growing success.



Climbers test the ropes at Climb Nashville

Soccer Hopes This Is The Year

by Fadi Pulous
Staff Writer

The MBA varsity and junior varsity soccer teams are looking forward to another strong year with help from every single class in the high school.

With few returning seniors, the varsity team will be relying on its juniors, sophomores, and freshmen to help lead the team to a state title. Houston Oldham, varsity team captain, returns for his fourth straight year as a varsity player. With the loss of Alexander Darsinos to a professional club team, the returning seniors will have to step up and help keep the scoring alive. Seniors Jonathan Haynes, Alex Owings, and Grant Gardner will have to fill in.

Coach Cheevers has high hopes for this year's varsity team. He believes that despite being undersized in terms of height, if the team works hard on their running, passing, and tactics, a state championship is possible.

Soccer Weights and Running was brutal in the cold, but it will pay off in the long run. Coach Lanier, the silent contributor and varsity head coach, looks forward to working with this group of men as he tries to lead them to another state championship. New varsity additions Rob Smith, Reed Stanberry, and Will Overton anticipate pulling out all the stops in an attempt to capture a win over division rival Father Ryan. A tough loss last year in a short match leaves the Varsity itching for a rematch. The Varsity's first game

was cancelled due to a raging March snow shower. Look for more updates on the varsity soccer team as the season progresses.

The MBA Junior Varsity team is also looking forward to another strong showing, coming off a 13-1-1 season last year, with the only loss coming to a strong Father Ryan team and a tie to a physical Mt. Juliet team early in the season.

This year's JV squad expects leadership from all the junior and sophomore players as they help welcome in the freshman players. The season started off well for the JV team as they took down a Varsity/JV combo team from Martin Luther King Magnet School. The 3-0 win was a great statement from this year's team, as Ben Crook, William Flautt, and Stephan Bedard all scored. Physical defense and goal-keeping from Will Andrews, Paul Van Pernis, and goalie Ryan King helped preserve the shutout. Ian Preston and Turner Henderson played phenomenal games in the mid-field, as they controlled the ball for the majority of the game and were great on the passing game.

The JV and Varsity teams go into this spring break with a bit of momentum and open up play full speed during the last week of March. Come out and support both teams as they start the long road toward a state championship.

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The MBA Science Department

Talks About Pandemics

by Seth Akers-Campbell

Staff Writer

Each year, most of us get a flu shot. It works about half the time, right? But what happens when you get the flu, and you don't get over it after a few days? Or a few weeks?

Every year, the World Health Organization picks three viral strains of influenza, known as "the flu" to most of us, to be included in its recommended flu shot. But the process to develop the shot takes time, and usually by flu season the major strain going around is not included in the vaccine. The influenza virus, like many other viruses, is constantly evolving through both natural and artificial selection as we humans attempt to kill it. The viruses genetically resistant to our efforts continue to infect the population and thrive because they are harder to kill.

Recently the avian influenza ("Bird flu") has been receiving quite a bit of media attention. In third world countries Bird flu is not only killing wild and domestic birds, but its mutating quickly and spreading to humans. The World Health Organization reports that 63% of humans infected with Bird flu strain H5N1 since 2003 have died.

But will Bird flu be the next pandemic? According to a recent MBA Science Department poll, two-thirds of our own experts believe that some type of influenza virus could be the next great pandemic, with Bird flu being a very likely strain to infect millions. Africa, Asia, China, and, perhaps surprisingly, Russia were cited as likely places for an epidemic to start. But if diseases are rampant on the other side of the world, are we safe?

With the transportation systems of the modern world, highly virulent

diseases can spread from remote provinces in China to the United States in a few hours. Modern technological and scientific advances have allowed for the fast prevention of outbreaks, as evidenced by the tuberculosis scare last year, when an Atlanta lawyer flew around Europe for two weeks to get married before finally being quarantined in the United States, keeping the increasingly antibiotic-resistant bacterial disease from spreading. Because of this and other lucky escapes from pandemics, modern countries with modern science seem to be safe, yet antibiotic resistant microorganisms are making gains. Half of the MBA science teachers polled were confident that humans would be able to effectively control diseases, despite their frequent mutations and high reproduction rates. Yet the other half believed that diseases would eventually win out because of their evolutionary advantage.

So, will disease conquer us? The MBA Science Department is evenly split on the final outcome of this battle, yet warns that the influenza virus is humanity's most dangerous opponent, with antibiotic-resistant bacteria coming in as the second greatest threat. Biology and Environmental Science AP teacher Mr. Pruitt argues, however, that the current major diseases no longer have a chance of blowing into a full pandemic because they have been known for such a long time now. He says to watch for the sudden appearance of disease in a 3rd-world environment where a new disease or strain could infect millions of people. It seems likely then that a new threat may appear for the next generation of MBA scientists to overcome.

Mr. Caldwell Leaves A Few Words

by Campbell Haynes

Staff Writer

Veteran MBA faculty member Michael Caldwell is retiring from teaching after this school year. Mr. Caldwell has coached football at the freshman and 8th-grade levels, he has been the varsity golf coach, he has taught all levels of math, and he has been chairman of the math department. He loves to chat, but, as you will see, he does not waste words. Through all his years at MBA, he never lost his irascibility nor his remarkable memory. Mr. Caldwell can, with only an occasional miss, tell you the name of a long-gone teacher who taught for only a year and when that year was, and he can tell you the graduating class of almost any past student. Having graduated from Vanderbilt, he came to MBA in 1973, back when telephones still had a dial, back when tests were printed on the mimeograph machine (situated roughly where the west side of the faculty room is now located), long before computers invaded all aspects of life, and when Brett Favre was just a baby.

The Bell Ringer's Campbell Haynes asked Mr. Caldwell a few questions, just enough to pique our interest and desire to probe deeper.

Bell Ringer: How long have you been a teacher at MBA?
Mr. Caldwell: 35 years.

BR: What are some of your most memorable experiences while at MBA?

MC: The 1994 MBA vs. Franklin substate basketball game, Brandt Snedeker's first state golf championship ('97), MBA vs. Bolles football game ('99), and Dr. Paschall's announcement that he had pancreatic cancer (11/5/93).

BR: Do you have any hobbies?
MC: Golf, movies, reading mystery/detective fiction.

BR: What is your favorite movie?
MC: *The Godfather*.

BR: T.V. show?
MC: *Law and Order*.

BR: Sports team?
MC: NY Yankees.

BR: Why do you plan on retiring after the end of this year?
MC: 35 years is a long time...plus I'm a little bit lazy.

BR: What do you plan on doing after you retire?
MC: No definite plans, except to relax, get better at golf, ... perhaps travel.

The Bell Ringer wants to be among the first to thank Mr. Caldwell for his thirty-five years of service to the students of MBA and to express our regret that his intellectual inspiration will be unknown to young minds of the future. Thank you, Mr. Caldwell.

MBA Math League Team Wins

by Will Henry

Staff Writer

For some, the big game comes on Friday nights; for others, it's Sunday afternoons. But, for a select group of MBA students, come one Thursday every month and a half, it's game time.

In the final chapter of the Interscholastic Math League on March 6th at not-so-central Ravenwood High School, MBA was able to cap off a great season with some top finishes.

In Algebra I, Hunter Tidwell placed 5th and Thom Bu placed 3rd. Sweeping the Algebra II division were 3rd-place Carter Callaway, 2nd-place Michal Zienkiewicz, and 1st-place Jichao Deng.

In Pre-Calculus, Rahul Sastry pulled off a 3rd-place finish.

In Statistics, Will Henry finished 5th, Michael Seitz placed 3rd, and Fitz Lassing took 1st.

At each of the four matches, the top two scores from a team comprised the team score. At the final competition,

the graders added all four team scores to determine the season winners. MBA placed 5th in Geometry, 3rd in Algebra I, 2nd in Pre-Calculus and Calculus, and 1st in Algebra II and Statistics.

In other math-related news, the junior-school Mathcounts team once again won the city Mathcounts tournament and qualified for the state competition for the 7th straight year.

In the AMC 10 test, Pat Killian and Andrew Powell tied for 1st place in the school. In the AMC 12, Karl Mecklenborg and Rahul Sastry both qualified for the next round of testing.

In the second year that MBA participated in the Interscholastic Math League, the hard work that the MBA students put into the competitions was indeed reflected by their high finishes. Essentially summing up the season, first-timer to the competitions sophomore Pat Killian says: "This was awesome!"

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Science Olympiad Wins Region

by Chunbum Park

Staff Writer

The Big Red Army succeeded in Operation Scientific Freedom at MTSU a couple of weeks ago, when the Division C squad claimed the top spot, and the junior schoolers won 4th place, qualifying for the state competition.

The high school team received the regional 1st place trophy and a wooden plaque, thanks to its 16 medal wins out of 23 events (5 gold, 6 silver, 4 bronze, and 1 zinc). The next two in the competition were MLK (94 points) and Franklin Road Academy (96 points), while MBA had an uncontested score of 78 points (smaller is better: 1st place is one point better than the two a team receives for 2nd place).

The junior school placed in 12 events, with 5 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze, and 2 zinc medals. This squad trailed closely behind MLK's 92 points, with a total of 104 points. The 1st and 2nd places were Harpeth Hall (73 points) and St. Rose of Lima Elementary School (85 points).

Thirteen teams were in Division C and twelve teams were in Division B (some schools had two teams – A & B; if both teams place, only 1 team advances to the state). The MTSU competition is one of the larger regional meets in the country, and for this reason 4th placers also receive medals. Despite its size, the MTSU meet may not be a very competitive tournament, if one considers that other regional meets in states such as California boasted 2nd and 5th places in the Division C of the 2007 National Tournament.

I interviewed Will Hannon and Daniel Arteaga about their regional experience. Here are Will's responses:

Chunbum: What did you do in Disease Detective?

Will: We used a volt meter to measure and read blood level, analyzed graphs, etc.

C: You won 3rd place in disease detective. What prevented you from getting 1st or 2nd places?

W: We were careless in defining the terms – the other teams must have been more specific with their definitions.

C: How did the event Circuit Lab go?

W: We won 1st place, which was actually surprising because we went in there without knowing what to expect. We basically analyze circuits and answer hypothetical questions about them.

C: The other events?

W: We didn't get a medal on ecology – which was unexpected. In Electric Vehicle, we won 2nd place, barely.

Basically, you build a vehicle before the competition and program it to travel a certain distance that we don't know about beforehand. At the event, you predict the

time it takes to travel. We had to count in binary because our robot's vex computer can be programmed only in the binary code. The 1st placer went very straight because of balance – the structure was more square and sound, and so they won by a few more points.

Now, a word or two from Daniel:

Chunbum: How did you do in Forensics?

Daniel: We won first place – thanks to Krzysztof. It consisted of different chemistry tests, flame tests, fiber tests, DNA sampling, finger print matching, etc. It's like what the FBI does.

C: What did you do in Food Science?

D: We won 2nd place there, which was a surprise because we didn't feel so confident. We tested mystery samples for the presence of some basic food ingredients like starch, glucose, proteins, carbohydrates, etc., and solved math questions having to do with calories.

The medalists and their events:

Gold: 5 events

Circuit Lab – Will Hannon, Robert McNeilly

Forensics – Daniel Arteaga, Krzysztof Zienkiewicz

Robot Ramble – Vic Goetz, Sam Moxley

Oceanography – Robert McNeilly, Mitchell Lukens

Rocks and Minerals – Seth Akers-

Campbell, Michal Zienkiewicz

Silver: 6 events

Cell Biology – Rahul Sastry, Chunbum Park

Chemistry Lab – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Kevin Carr

Boomilever – Kevin Carr, Michal Zienkiewicz

Fermi Questions – Rahul Sastry, Andrew Powell

Electric Vehicle – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Will Hannon

Food Science – Daniel Arteaga, Kevin Carr

Bronze: 4 events

Disease Detective – Will Hannon, Kevin Carr

Physics Lab – Krzysztof Zienkiewicz, Rahul Sastry

Five-Star Science – Rahul Sastry, Seth Akers-Campbell

Remote Sensing – Robert McNeilly, Mitchell Lukens

Zinc: 1 event

Astronomy – Andrew Powell, Richard Wall

A Note From The Spanish Department

by Alvin Kim

This summer Mr. Gray would like to take a group of Spanish students to Guadalajara, Mexico. Exact dates have not been decided due to a lack of student-based support. This city is one of the most culturally immersed locations throughout Mexico and is an ideal destination for young Spanish speakers at MBA.

Students would spend one week there getting to know its people, the dialect, and culture. With its many picturesque survivals of the Spanish colonial era, this modern, commercial metropolis has become the *Perla del Occidente* or *Pearl of the West*. More information to come if more students show interest and support. Contact Mr. Gray if interested.

Michael and Alan Go to The Movies: Spring Break Edition

by Michael Downing and Alan Schulman

Entertainment Editors

this movie unless you're obsessed with ancient history, or have nothing to do.

Vantage Point– The overall concept of *Vantage Point* was successful. Each new perspective added another element to the story. However, the rewind sequences when transitioning between vantage points were annoying, and laughably ridiculous at times. And the biggest disappointment of all was the ending. It was perhaps the most anticlimactic, out-of-place outcome we have ever seen. Only see this movie if you are prepared to be frustrated.

Semi-Pro – Will Ferrell has proven once again that even the most stupid of comedies can be hilarious with the right cast. Though the movie lacks any serious theme or plot (like most Will Ferrell movies), it redeems itself with essentially non-stop humor. If you're a 1970's music and basketball fan looking for some good times, *Semi-Pro* is the movie for you.

10000 B.C. – This movie was an amalgamation of the most predictable, and forgettable, elements of the recent war films set in antiquity. With such an interesting premise, such as mammoths and saber-tooth tigers, this movie should have had at least a few redeeming qualities, but it didn't. The fight sequences had a level of violence that would have felt at home with a G-rating. Don't see

Be Kind Rewind – Yet another Jack Black movie requiring little thought to enjoy. *Be Kind Rewind* follows two young men desperately trying to refill movies at their video store to avoid being fired. Now, the concept sounds hilarious (especially if Jack Black is in on it), but the movie was somewhat disappointing as a comedy, and seemingly worthless from any other perspective. Still... there were some laughs

Jumper– This movie was suspenseful and intriguing from the beginning to the end. Yet, it lacks any elements which might distinguish it from a typical action film. You will see a repeated action sequence that's really cool to watch (the jumps), fight scenes intertwined with scenes of a predictable romantic pursuit, and a twist in the last third. Definitely it is worth seeing, but don't expect your life to change, despite the fact that it stars Samuel L. Jackson.

The Bank Job – Finally, an unpredictable heist movie. *The Bank Job*, though slow at times, is an extremely entertaining and well thought-out film. Tension is relatively high at all times, though the conflict gets to be a bit repetitive. Still, this movie lived up to and exceeded our expectations.



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